

The
Amber-Riders

AN UNFINISHED NOVEL

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The Amber-Riders

The Amber-Riders

AND OTHER POEMS

by

ANNIE CHARLOTTE DALTON

AUTHOR OF

"THE MARRIAGE OF MUSIC," "FLAME AND
ADVENTURE," "THE SILENT ZONE," ETC.



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*O*F THIS edition of "*The Amber Riders*," by Annie Charlotte Dalton, two hundred and fifty copies have been printed, of which two hundred and twenty-five are for sale.

This is number **178**

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ANNIE CHARLOTTE DALTON



AUTHOR'S NOTE

A FEW of the following poems were inspired by some of the eminent priests and men of letters who took a striking part in the late discussion of the question, "Where are the Dead?" which appeared in the columns of the "Daily News and Westminster Gazette" and was afterwards published in book form by Cassells & Co., Limited.

With due deference to the exigencies of poetry, only portions of each article could be used; but, wherever possible, some of the original phrases are included in the poems. At all times the spirit and meaning have been scrupulously studied and preserved with this reservation, that the various ideas have, inevitably, been described as they appear to the author of this book, and not perhaps as they were intended to be set forth by the several protagonists.

Mind speaks to mind, but how little of the original message goes from one to the other, and again, how very much more is sometimes perceived than was consciously intended.

Because of this, no names have been appended, but the poems in question are each distinguished by an asterisk.

The remainder are altogether original, or rather they are as original in thought as any poems can be



when the poet draws upon "a reservoir of experience very much larger than his own."

Amber, by the ancients, was supposed to be an emblem of immortality. Its origin is too well known to require any comment here. Much of it is of the Tertiary age.

In explanation of the title, "Amber-Riders," a few notes have been borrowed from Dr. O. C. Farrington's little brochure on "Amber." Our word, 'electricity' comes from the Greek word *elektron* which was the Greek name for amber. Amber was one of the first minerals in which electrical properties were noted.

The Sicilian amber which is washed up by the sea like the Prussian, has a beautiful fluorescence, blood-red and chrysolite-green being not uncommon.

In marshy regions men on horseback called amber-riders, follow the out-going tide in search of the yellow gum. It is often found entangled in seaweed and nets are sometimes used; it is also searched for by divers to some extent.

From time immemorial amber has been cast upon the sea-shore and has afforded a livelihood to coast-dwellers.

The poems are roughly arranged in the order of their size, as beads are threaded upon a string. Two or three have been taken from books now out of print.

A. C. D.



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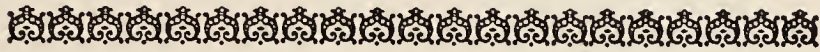
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The Amber-Riders



The Amber-Riders

I.

ONCE on a time, blown seeds of pine lay dreaming,
 Burgeoning from infant pride to soaring trees;
Now their spilled gums from marsh and surf are gleam-
 ing,
Ride, ride, O amber-riders! to the seas.

II.

Follow—oh, haste—the wide retreating ocean,
Watch when the loath, tormented billows come;
Scanning with eager glance the white commotion,
Snatch from the thin, spent wave the amber gum.

III.

There, in the glimmering sea-stone, scarlet fire,
Sicilian fire or colder Baltic, hides;
Tells how that forest's lambent cool desire
Smouldered unquenched beneath warm Tertiary tides.



IV.

Well, ah how well! wise Hellas knew and early
Found in crude childlike ways the electric spark;
Rubbing old silk with amber knew as nearly
As we who still are pondering in the dark.

V

Bees caught in glancing amber give remembrance
Of flowers, and honey made one summer's day;
Tree, flower and honey-bee, all live in semblance,
But they—we still are pondering—where are they?

VI

Bright, bright, the immemorial fires are glowing,
Fluorescent still though trees and bees have died,
And what the mystic fires are, there's no knowing,
But ride, O amber-hunters, seekers, ride!

VII

Even as you follow this retrieving ocean,
Searching lush weeds for fossils of a tree,
So do we ride with patience and emotion—
Riding, all riding to the Immortal Sea.



VIII

Oh, when our amber-riding days seem over,
And we embark upon that darkening main,
What brighter worlds, what seas we shall discover,
Riding each amber beach and beach again!



Beads of Amber



THE KINGDOM

THINE is the Kingdom which
is my body,
Thine is the Power which is my
soul,
Thine is the glory which is my
spirit;
In the Kingdom of Man
Is the Kingdom of Heaven.



THE CLOUD

✓ THE cloud is a gift from the
ocean,
In light, unhurrying motion,
To water-course and tree;
And "the little stream becomes a
river,"
And the gift is rendered again to
the Giver,
To the wide, unperishing Sea.



GOD IS

ONCE on a time I heard men
say,
“God IS.” I made a God of clay
After their pattern and they broke
My God to pieces ere He spoke.
Yet none shall cry me, “Ichabod !
The veil is rent, thou hast no God.”
Myself hath heard, myself hath
seen
His glory—let none come between.



FEEL NOT DISMAY

Feel not dismay
For that you cannot prove,
Your dead are living, they
Are in the hands of Love.

When endeth all,
The sudden stars above,
Our reeling spirits fall
Into the lap of Love.



A SOLITARY BIRD

A SOLITARY bird
Against the morning sky,
Of all things seen and heard,
None lifts the thoughts so high.

Oh, in that bird unknown,
Breasting the waves of light,
My soul foresees her own
Triumphant flight.



LIFE AND DEATH

I ASK of Life one little boon,
'Tis this, that she would spare
The dainty beauty of my dreams,
They grow so very fair.

I ask of Death no boon, nor crave
Redemption from his schemes,
I know his dusky galleons guard
The homeland of my dreams.



NOW

THIS is the hour and this the place
Our God hath chosen to show His face ;
With sudden splendour, rare surprise,
To startle our dream-wearied eyes.

The chosen hour ! the chosen place !
We cannot bear such blinding grace,
But trembling hold a burial dress
Before His lovely nakedness.



NASTURTIIUMS

C LARE brought me incense—
Aroma for the gods,
Scarlet and gold nasturtiums,
Fragrant flames;
Scented as spice of Araby,
Pungent and sweet,
What light intoxicates their amber frames!
Dearest of flowers! so beautiful, so droll—
Pondering, I know you for
The essence of her soul.



THE CHILD-HEART

WHERE is she now?—
He who the child-heart shields,
Has taken her out to open fields,
To see His clouds, to hear His birds,
And to converse with flocks and
herds.
There, a dull child put back to simpler things,
With joy she grows her infant
wings;
For she who fought lean years with
witless pain
And never grew, is home again.



EVER ON THE WING

I AM a bee—a lover of the Sun—
A wilding bee and ever on the wing;
I build my mossy dome upon the dun
Warm earth in fresh young spring;
And though I fly above the garden fence,
And suck the garden's sweetest sense,
No gardener shall my free soul shrive,
Nor draw me to his narrow hive,
While clover white and clover red,
Dainty bee-pastures round me spread;
While foliage of the tulip tree
Holds unctuous honey-dew for me,
And amber honey drowns regrets
In purple hearts of violets.



HIDDEN RIVERS

BRIGHT streams which never reach the sea,
Rivers which plunge into eternal night,
Mysterious is your hidden journey's end,
Unknown the sum of your delight.

What lonely Himalayan lake
By you is fed? What seeming humble powers
Have you, which cleave the soaring mountain's head,
And shake apart its toppling tower?



INTIMACY

THIS is the place of which she spoke so seldom,
But here, I know, she spent her earlier days;
This is the house, perchance, that once she lived in,
And often has she walked these pleasant ways.

These are the streets where once she did her shopping,
Pure was her taste, unerring was her eye,
Such love she had for all things rich and human;
Great was her spirit when she came to die.

This place—it is not all I once imagined;
Seeing it now, I know not what I sought;
But sweet, ah sweet, her presence here, her magic—
I am surrounded by her love and thought.



LIFE'S ONE LONG BATTLE

LIFE'S one long battle with reluctant flesh.
The soul, defied, in grim disease's mesh,
Flutters and tears and breaks that mesh in vain—
Life's one long battle with victorious pain,
And in the darkest hour weak love will say,
"Thy Lord, who loveth, takes thy health away."
But I, who know the truth far better, cry,
"Nay, God is Love, and thou, false love, doth lie."
How should He make a bright and musicked world
To house the deaf, the blind, the pain up-curved?
These, the half-born, let love and law respect,
But never, never crown them God's elect;
The chosen of His heart are pure and whole,
As fair in body as divine in soul.



REMEMBRANCE

A LITTLE path across a field
The springs of joy and grief unsealed—
It was so long since I had seen
A path so strait through fields so green.

A tiny path once used to lead
About a rolling wind-swept mead,
And right into a shady wood
Where bluebells loosened their fragrant flood,
And cloudless skies looked down into
A million other eyes of blue.

Had I not walked alone that day
I must have missed that little way,
The tiny dreaming path which told
So ardently of days of old.



THE RIDDLE

AS one may read some wonted word
In straitened sense of having erred,
And hesitating, pause to gaze
And spell the letters in amaze—
Or doubtful how the word should look,
Consult a sage and learned book,
Or ask some near familiar friend
The unfamiliar to amend;
So looking at your conduct strange,
I miss our cordial interchange,
And doubting ask, "Then whose the fault
That friendship thus should come to halt,
Do I mis-read or you mis-spell—
Who shall the truthful answer tell?
Or what the grave authorities
May settle which the true word is?"



THE HIGHWAY

THE coach is at the door
And I shall soon depart,
'Tis good to fear no more
All that is in my heart.

'Tis good to be alive,
On God's highway to go,
To care not to arrive
Loving the journey so.

With joy god-speed I make,
With laughter pay my toll,
No highwayman may take
The scrip which is my soul.

At every wayside inn,
* I find his loving care,
Who did my jaunts begin
And meets me everywhere.



GOAT'S HEART

When a wild sheep is near to death, it descends to the shelter of a wooded valley and there awaits the end. The wild goat of the Rockies . . . is content to lie down and sleep forevermore . . . on the upland solitudes of his beloved hills.—*Dan McGowan.*

Like a battening sheep, many days
I would graze;
With my wandering heart upon the hill
Took my fill,
Broke my will,
In the mean and pleasant pasturing maze.
Aching for my heart on the hill.
Limp and still,
Like a mountain sheep's my body lies;
Lying, dies;
Dying, cries,
"But thy heart—it shall die on the hill.
With the flying goat it shall leap
Up the steep,
Panting, it shall breathe that upland air,
Cold and rare,
Waiting there
For the next supreme adventure of sheep."



EXPECTANCY

DEEPER than any sky,
Broader than any sea,
This over-ruling 'I',
This mystic 'me.'

I shall not need a home,
Space will not hamper me,
When I go hence and roam
Infinity.

I shall come face to face
(All that is best in me)
With love, divinest grace,
And purity.

God will not me offend,
Intolerably bright,
For Christ through me will send
His own sweet Light.



I have communion now,
God's spirit is in me;
With reverent love I bow
To Mystery.

The Mystery—when I die,
No matter where I be,
That I shall still be I
As He is He.



THE QUIET HOUSE

THE boys are at home from school,
I can hear them in the street;
All day long in the heat and cool
Their eager restless feet,
To and fro, to and fro!

The boys are at home from school,
All have come home but ours;
With treasured toy and tool
They fill the happy hours,
But our boys' feet have gone
From playing-field and street,
And silence broods upon
This quiet house—each neat,
Unruffled bed, each tidy room
Aches with a tense, intolerable gloom.

Oh, in my dreams I hear,
In sweet day-dreams I see
Our happy children playing near
As once they used to be.

God!—if to us no more



Come eager running feet,
Guide them to Thine own door,
Along Thy pleasant street.
Oh, guide with love beyond
The best love we have given,
Bring them awhile, dear God, lest they despond,
To the playing-fields of Heaven.



THE QUESTION

DEATH is the end of all," one cried sincerely.
Or ever the echoes of his voice gave pause,
Came broken answers, pitifully, clearly,
Doubting his right to promulgate his cause.

And some who scorned the sounds of wrath and wailing,
Said from the depths of their own strange dismay:
"Such utterance is false and unavailing.
But if the dead do live—oh, where are they?

Where are the dead? And none may call it foolish
To urge this question to all men supreme;
Nor may the wise and careful call them ghoulish
Who search old graves to solve an empty dream.

The modern spirit-waker, greatly daring,
Claims at a word to call from the abyss,
The single soul through time and space far-faring—
What torture does he leave, what ancient bliss?



Is there no spot where mighty hosts assemble
Between our universe's sundering poles?
Is there no spot to which with hands that tremble,
We point and say, "There live the dead men's
souls?"

Oh, you who think to hold the curse and blessing
Of God to loose or grant, what fit reply
Have you for us whose hearts are faint with gues-
sing?
Where are our dead? we ask, as they we die."



SHIPWRECK IN HEAVEN

WHERE are the great gondolas and the gods,
Who once so sweetly plied from star to star,
Skimming the aerial seas with mighty helmsmen?
Curious, they leaned to men, they struck the bar—
There is shipwreck in heaven.

Where are the golden argosies that brought
Spices and balm and linens white to us?
Where are the peacocks and the apes the helmsmen
Stole from the magic isles, from ports of Zeus?
There is shipwreck in heaven.

Where are the Nautilus-skiffs whose fragile sails
Furled mid the rushes of the back-set streams,
Waited the will and dance of fairy helmsmen—
Bright was the sward with other-wordly gleams?
There is shipwreck in heaven.



We are the wreckers, smoking are our hills,
We have built false beacons on our treacherous shore:
We have swept heaven's seas, we have drowned the
 mighty helmsmen,
And the gods and the fairies come sailing no more;
There is shipwreck in heaven.

Sole mariner of its broad and shipless seas,
One god still rides above the sinister bar;
Hourly Death lands and takes with haughty helmsmen,
Dark, dark revenges for each helm and spar,
For the shipwrecks in heaven.



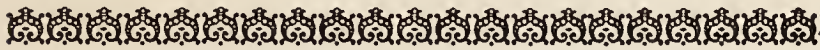
APPARITION

MY SOUL, why lingerest thou? The day
With all its pride and whims is past;
The gustful wind whirls night away,
The bullying rain beats thick and fast.

The streets grow wide, the lonely lamps
Companionship the lonely pools;
And down this church-door's streaming clamps,
One grinning gargoyle lonelier drools.

Night's noise and pageantry are gone,
And from yon lean and ghostly tower,
The wan-faced clock is booming 'One!'
And lonely, lonely is the hour.

The village sleeps, yet hark! the hum
Of plaintive voices shunning sound,
And down the streets frail shadows come,
Walking their stolen nightly round.



Their floating garments dim each light,
The rain-slit darkness veils their shame,
From each eye-socket's emptied sight,
Flashes a strange and greenish flame.

No other torch have they—what gleam
Could light so well the wandering soul
Whose shuddering nights no dawns redeem,
Who strolls these streets on hell's parole?

Glide on, glide on, pale revellers!
How silent seems your revelling,
And yet the dreaming village stirs
And trembles at some unknown thing.



MANY MANSIONS

SOME would take the road
Following after God;
Some would hide in graves—
Weary, worn-out slaves!
Some are not so bright,
Some are not so brave,
Whither do these go
Their dear souls to save?
“In my Father’s House—
In their Father’s House
Are many mansions.”

Some to Avalon
Many years are gone,
Some to Balder’s place,
Some to Allah’s grace.
Some are not so safe,
Some are not so sure,
Whither do these go
Their wan souls to cure?
“In My Father’s House—
In their Father’s House
Are many mansions.”

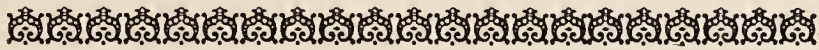


All that I can see
(Dread infinity)
All that I can guess
(Quickening loveliness)
Lies, a moonless sea
Full of light and foam,
vv In that dwindling isle
Hides the wanderer's home?
 "In your Father's House—
 In our Father's House
 Are many Mansions."



TO MARGARETTE

I SAID,
"Is it well with him who left us lately?"
And one answered, "It is well,"
Sedately;
And even then his foot was on the stair
That led him to his rest,
She unaware
The darling guest
Would need her, loving ministrant, no more;
Even then he had his hand upon a Door,
Which, hospitable as hers, was ever on the latch
For him who had no hearthstone of his own
Save in the hearts of those who knew his match
Was matchless; he alone
Brought with him that clear atmosphere of joy,
The wisdom of a man shot puckishly; a boy
Still unafraid of life, a giant elf,
No humourless shadow of himself.
Was he, when he went from us;
The wistful jest, the merry quip,
Still hovering at his lip,
No murmur dolorous.



He was a king who had no need
To carry with him scrip and screed ;
A wizard whose sweet incantations
Gave joy and healing to the nations ;
A friend whose heart, a noble shrine,
Harboured all thoughts and things divine,
And wrought within its compass worlds of beauty.
Ah, Margarette—
Ah, that we could pass
So with a smile up to that Garden Gate,
Where all the poets' fairies wait ;
Into that Garden Wild
Where fragrant blossoms strew their frail confetti ;
And, turning at the Open Door,
Meet with a jest, a king of love and song once more.



DIFFIDENCE

WHERE are the dead? With calm and level eyes,
The man of science sweeps the unanswering skies
And from his high, serene appraisal of man,
Essays the dumb Creator's hidden plan.

With diffidence he speaks; humility
Tempers his judgment, crops his hope, and he
Speaks as he knows the truth—let no one dare
To hint of scorn or scepticism there.

“Life after death” he cries, “in ancient times
Was but the pallid eve of shadowy climes;
To-day men ask a greater boon than this,
They must survive, and so survive in bliss.

And, thus surviving they must be aware
Of full existence; others smiling dare
To say that death is all; and some, the verge
Of death is greater Life—in It we merge.

Where are the dead? We do not know and still
We fit a fond belief each to his will,
But seldom do we earnestly reflect
On what we really wish for, what expect.



The tale our bodies tell binds fast the soul,
For mind and body do but halve the whole;
And when the body's beauty falls away,
The beauty of the soul is, too, but clay.

Again: Are we immortal? Then must be
The newt, the worm, the jelly-fish, and we
Cannot but smile to think that these must share
(So evolution says) our Heavenly Fare.

Like some electric current works the mind,
In every change of matter do we find
Electric change, why should not thought and feeling
So spring to life, and through the world be stealing?

So spring to life, to wander throughout space,
Wandering, loose patterns, in a fruitless chase,
And meeting naught to strike the electric spark,
Stream to life's Spirit Pool, the unknown Dark?

This is to me the truth—not that I know
How, whither, why, the electric spirits go;
'Tis harder now to think of Heaven as such,
Man has grown up, is wise, and knows too much.



THE PALIMPSEST

AGES ago, God wrote "I AM" in flaming script:
"I AM" an oriflamme

Whose sudden splendour smote the primal dark;
The startled mountains from their moorings slipped,
The sea grew chill and stark.

Then man looked up and stayed His Hand
Like one, who loving ease, is irked and galled;
Making some pert and petulant demand,
He plucked the falling pen and slowly scrawled
(As humouring a child, God stood apart)
Over the great "I AM"—"Thou art"—

Over the great "I AM" he scrawled
The pot-hooks and the strokes he called
Magic, and vision:
Fantastic word and number too, he chose,
The new and cryptic language to transpose.
Till from his weary mind and heart arose
A slow derision.
Still o'er the blotted script he lingers
With itching, facile, busy fingers.



New signs and auguries drawn,
The great "I AM" erased,
He cries, "At last—the gods be praised—
2 The only true god—the holy dawn!"
And cries again in that same breath,
"False God! false dawn!" and so to death.

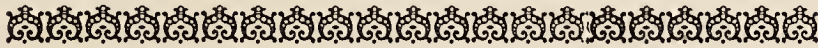
With hands that tremble, swimming eyes that smart,
He writes of grace, simplicity, and truth,
All that he dreamed not in his captious youth;
"All these," he cries, "and these, Thou art!
Enough of death, enough of strife"—And so to life.

Over the scrabbled scroll he leans and lingers,
And lo! beneath his empty, idle fingers,
A lovely face as from a crystal grows,
An unseen Face above him glows,
He feels his unseen Father move,
And in a keen ecstatic pain
Half feverishly he writes again,
"And Thou, and THOU art Love!"





“Thou art—” “Thou art—” “Thou art”—
And God looks on and stays His Hand,
Making no petulant demand;
But, when the scribbling’s done
For sorry lack of scroll and sun,
And truth is whirled away with sham,
He will take up His pen,
And musingly will trace again,
On other stars for other men,
His great, august “I AM—”



GOD AND DRAGON

ON HAREBELL banks we used to lie,
And gazing at the friendly sky,
It seemed a pleasing thing to die,

When we were young ;
For heaven was then so near and dear,
Bright angels could their wings unfold
And bear us to her streets of gold

When we were young.
Now grown, but young in heart, we find
That longing still in heaven to roam,
But far away her long hills wind
And God, He seldom seems at home.
Are there no fairy tales for those
Who loving Mary's portion chose,
And sitting at the Master's feet,
Cared not for savoury nor sweet,

When they were young?

On harebell banks we may not lie,
And gazing at the frowning sky,
It seems no pleasing thing to die

Now we are old ;
For heaven is far to seek, and bleak—



We know so much of sun and star,
Old-fashioned, too, bright angels are,
Now we are old.
There are no fairy tales for us,
Gleaming with gold
And glamorous,
Like those our rocking mothers sung,
Like those our sterner fathers told,
When we were young.

So, so I murmured, and to me
Came instant answer—from the sky
Nothing—but on my pillowing knee
Rested, from nowhere as it seemed,
Rested a book of ancient runes,
And from its leaves of gold up-gleamed
Rousal, assent and lullaby,
Mingling in one their alien tunes,
Singing of dragon, man, and fairy,
God, demi-god and wandering wight
Whose luckless star gave us delight
In far-off days, in fables airy.

New snarls of age, old feints of youth,
Glittering like cobwebs on a tree,
Here are set forth—with sacred truth
They shine and shine and capture me;



And shivering thrills I loved to feel
 When I was young,
I feel, and care not to conceal
 Now I am old,
For I myself am god and dragon,
Tipping with Zeus the royal flagon,
Hiding with Python in his cave—
All things that be, I am and have.

O book of subtle wisdom! bright
With every man-discovered light,
Your pages flutter with the Breath
Of Life; no word, no hint of Death
These tales, these sacred fables hold;
The dazzling angel-wings unfold,
And heaven again is near and dear,
Over her long hills we may roam
And God forever be at home.
No more the prose of life decry,
Nor wish on harebell banks to lie,
Nor gaze up to the pleasant sky—
Soul! 'tis an easy thing to die
 Though we are old.



ALL SOULS' DAY

ON ALL SOULS' DAY great Raphael came
To call from "classic wards of hell,"
The Muses Nine whose ancient fame
Philosophers and poets tell;
To bring them then before Jehovah
And His great criticizing choirs,
That there they might with joy recover
Their art of old, and tune their lyres.

Calliope and Clio sang
In laurel crowns heroic strains,
Thalia's voice in rapture rang
In praise of flowers and shepherd swains.
Learned and lyric, nimble-footing,
Mnemosyne's four graces see!
Triumphed no less flower-wreathed and fluting
Euterpe, grave Melpomene.

Ah! much I feared that Raphael rued
The Muses' visitation well:
A thousand jealousies intrude
To waft sweet singers back to hell;
And even to high, amused Jehovah,
To saint and seraphim, was given
A little leisure to recover
From such transfiguration of heaven.



Oh! that on Helicon could meet
That glorious sisterhood once more,
And I, a humble herd, entreat
Their music at the dancing floor!
But here there shines no sacred mountain,
No Muse bestows her lyric boon,
No Hippocrene, sparkling fountain,
Casts broken rainbows to the moon.

Perseus and Icarus still soar,
Stout Hercules performs great deeds,
Ulysses spoils the Ismarus shore,
Queens covet god-forbidden seeds;
For none of these I cry the Muses
To raise once more their song divine,
And thin were Raphael's prim excuses
To these so pardonably mine.

Thousands of songs have fallen to dust!
Their soul and spirit lives anew;
The triple gift was theirs, so must
My song have soul and spirit too,
Fitly to praise the might and glory
Of men surpassing men of old;
Fitly to tell the grander story
Of those who have not fame or gold.



Unlike chinchillas who must live
Ten thousand feet above low earth,
Where no rain is, that they may give
Their myriad-minded children birth,
The souls I sing live in the mire,
Like mice they come from field and fen;
The tender fruit of their desire
Is trampled neath the foot of men.

Humble, imperishable they,
Who have no name, whose deeds unknown,
A puff of wind has swept away
Lightly as summer's seeds are blown.
I think sometimes their marching legions
Must crack the very roofs of heaven,
Their whelming floods out-stretch her regions, *h*
Their wakened trumpets drown her Seven.

For, who can count the golden grain
Which paves the broad and lone sea-floors,
Or who the diamond drops of rain
Pouring from heaven's high treasury-doors?
As vain to sing of humble gardeners,
Of vales bright-patterned with their toil;
Of crows and cobblers; gentle pardoners,
Who all souls' frailty would assoil.



Of runt and mongrel, clown and knave,
Those myriad mice of field and fen,
Who, having little soul to save,
Pour out their all for taller men;
Of outcasts leaping flimsy barriers;
Of saints, sans halo, crook and niche;
Unlettered loons; of unknown warriors,
Each in his own, unhonoured ditch.

On All Souls' Day great Raphael came
To call from "classic wards of hell,"
The Muses Nine whose ancient fame
Philosophers and poets tell.
Alas! alas! ill-sung my story—
One lonely muse may not divine
A whole wide world of hidden glory—
Raphael needs fetch again the Nine.



CHRIST AND APOLLO

AND was there then no other way—
This tortured God, this traitor's tree,
This potter's field—oh, who will sing with me,
Or pray as I must pray?

I sing of Calvary. Calvary reels,
And from dim shades of old enticed,
Apollo runs to hold the fainting Christ,
A falling star reveals.

I sing sad Calvary's curséd place,
Whose smoking blood-gouts nought congeals;
I sing Apollo, gentle god, who kneels
With mercy-shining face.

He plucks the nails; how patiently
He laves the pale and tortured brow;
Each gaping wound with balm he staunches now,
And fells the Sacred Tree.

Fresh water from the brook he brings;
Samaria's greater son, he goes
And parts his scanty tale of tattered clothes,
And takes his lyre and sings:



“Alas for us whom men have loved !
To shadows dim they exile me,
And Thee they nailed unto this burning Tree,
Who once the wide hills roved.

“To Thee, Thy Father beauty gave
In overflowing measure, then,
What beauty lies in Thy sad wounds that men
Must call on them to save?

“Thy laurel leaves, they trampled down,
To set this crackling Tree so high ;
Stretched on Thy Cross the groaning millions die,
But who shall bear Thy Crown?

“Thy radiant Crown—Ah me ! what loss
To leave Thee dreaming on the shore,
On Judah’s pleasant hills, and evermore
To part Thee from Thy Cross?

“To set apart Thy death and pain,
So Thy stopt youth, Thy shortened hour,
A Dead Sea rose, a withered salt-marsh flower,
Might spring and bloom again?



“And thou, Apollo! skulking thus,
No Pythia, oracle, nor shrine—
What hast thou now, what pomp, what power is thine,
O wandering child of Zeus?

“I see Dodona’s lovely hills,
Her rustling groves of sacred oak;
I hear the thunders that my Father woke,
The murmuring of His rills.

Again I bring Admetus joy,
Or worship at the Vestals’ Fire,
Or aid sly Neptune with my golden lyre
To build the walls of Troy.

“Again I go to glorious Crete,
To purge myself of Python’s blood;
To Delphi’s peerless shrine where panting stood
My laurel-crowned athlete.

“Sometimes as in my youth serene,
With joyous heart the road I keep,
And there I hear distraught Cassandra weep
With Mary Magdalene.



“Sometimes when loudly North winds moan,
I come into the weary town,
And there I see fair Vestals falling down
 To worship stock and stone.

“Sometimes I long for something new,
And through enchanting countries range,
To find strange men and maids who passing strange
 Intoxications brew.

“And thrice to gloomy shrines I came,
And thrice I marked a gloomier throng;
And oh, Thou patient Lord of living Song!
 Men called them by Thy Name.

“Thy Name—What memory beguiles?
I would Thy strong Song-Brother be;
Two faithful Sons of mighty Lords are we—”
 The dying Saviour smiles.

He smiles (so Love on lover shone)
His tired eyes are full of speech,
His wounded fingers flicker, cannot reach,
 And answer makes He none.



I sing no more of Calvary. See,
Apollo rise—grim priests of pain
Have seized my Lords of Song, and even again,
 They nail One to a tree.

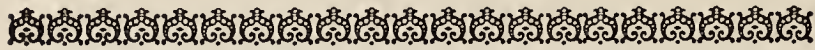
I sing no more—let lips be dumb—
But through the fields of my desire,
With burning Songs, immortal Songs of Fire,
 Christ and Apollo come!



REVERIE

DEATH is forever wooing me, and life,
Cold as a stranger, doffs his hat and goes.
Brave death! I'll bicker thus with you no more;
Now of your natural beauties I propose
To welcome tale and due; in scorn of strife,
I will make trusty peace with you, explore
All sweet necessity of you else mourned;
Life's comedies are but old-fashioned shows;
Brave death! your comeliness hath me suborned.

Dark Regent of the Lethe stream! what calm,
What cool security broods at my breast,
Moving so smoothly on your waveless flood,
Dreaming the golden dreams of perfect rest.
Power, strength and beauty lift the nerveless arm,
Swiftly we glide about the enchanted wood,
Guiding our prow toward the distant foam,
Where whirlpools suck, and stronger souls deride,
Where rapids roar and timid souls go home.



Fringing your tunnelled stream, on this near shore,
Your lovely leisure peoples banks and trees,
With knights and maids than life could have no fairer,
Satyrs and gnomes who careless loiterers seize,
Dallying upon the forest's fern-pricked floor—
Rare lusty wooers, life can show no rarer.
Brave death! they fear not you. No gloomy portal
Gapes at their beauty with its dragon's jaws;
Brave death! they know not you, they live immortal.

Yonder, across the stream, throbs life's demesne;
There, far too seldom, I have walked the verge,
Peered through the trees, and pale with trembling
wonder,
Dared for a moment in its crowd to immerge;
Tasted an hour its rapturous might-have-been,
Then from its blinding glare and deafening thunder,
Its hollowed laughter and its stifled screams,
Fled with a fainting heart across calm Lethe,
There, there to anchor fondly by my dreams.



Once, when I ventured through life's loveliest glade,
Silent and bright as you, O death! a soul
Poured out hot scarlet on the sun-soaked grass,
Breaking away from life and life's control—
I, loving life, and him so ill-betrayed!
Gay life! and cheapened so—at such a pass.
Fair seemed, my haunted dreams, no rash men there
Sear with their blood the virginal bloom of spring,
Fools break not in, nor thieves nor murderers dare.

I, who must live in dreams on your parole,
Crossing no longer to the noisier bank,
Stare at these ghosts of life who hem me round,
Stare at their antics, or forgetting, thank
Each as it were of flesh and blood; cajole
Each to return to this enchanted ground.
Nought is all false nor true, I heard one say:
False, true, our hopes, our dreams, our expectations,
And death is but a short and covered way.



Wild rolls this tunnelled stream, and still across,
Ghosts on the farther shore and ghosts on this,
Call to each other, pass the time of day,
And knowing nothing, finding nought amiss,
Speak of no larger gain, no greater loss,
Till ghost with ghost together launch away,
And which is dream and which is life none know;
Down, down together, all the way apart,
Both at the last on this strong stream must go.

Custom is all that baulks the daring soul,
Yet prisoned flames burst into sudden song,
And poet-rebels publish their despair
Of this abhorred and ever-increasing wrong.
Names are not names—a long dishonoured roll—
Words are not words, but Robot-bones and bare;
Oh, that the old Greek Titan fire might bring,
For man's starved soul is like a curlew crying,
And all his body cries out to the Spring.

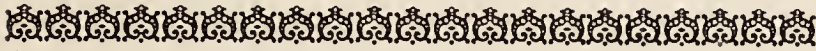


Old words have lost their ancient power, though vast
Yawns the abyss from which new words are born,
Born like faint echoes from a distant flute,
Or brazen clanging from a frenzied horn;
Now is no language for our souls, aghast
Speak we in vain, the answering sense is mute;
There is no language, no, nor any speech,
In which to prove our lives, our passing dreams,
The old creation finds us out of reach.

Nameless is either bank—you, dark between,
O gulf of moving waters! have no name.
Time, Lethe, Life and Death, Dream and Despair—
What are these signs but trifles for a game?
Grossly miscalled, what gentle things have been
Wrath and delusion, for our souls a snare!
Lost are the great mysterious names unheard;
Lost too, we know not if we dream or live,
Life? Death? We have no Master but the Word.



Death is forever wooing me—in dream
I have been safe, but now even there his hand
With lifted finger beckons me away,
And patiently his boat rides on the stream.
Life *has* been good, my dreams have been so grand,
I know not whether to go forth or stay
Would be the better way. What thing I do,
Some new experience sweeps me from my feet;
If dreams then play me false, will Death be true?



A BALLAD OF SICK MEN

ONCE greatly to adventure born,
Here must we lie, sick men outworn,
And our souls' dreams must now reduce
To battling for our bodies' use.

Into the silent heavens we stare,
Into our hearts—what silence there!
Death is away, his tale of men
Is short by two, we live again.

His tale of men—each virgin page
Is blotted on from age to age,
And death by men is still denied
As if no man nor brute had died.

They too will go. What thing shall be
To drown them deep in land or sea,
As strange and hostile forces broke
The ancient Paleolithic folk?

This sunlit earth re-cools its crust
In twilight born of gilded dust;
The sunshine-driven seasons fold
The crescent moon around the old.



Pure and serene is our delight
In glamouries thinly lacing night;
Yon meteor-battered, stricken moon
Bestows on us this gentle boon.

Grim mountains floating sail the earth,
And in far seas the towering girth
Of icebergs tokening land give way—
So insubstantial too are they.

All things to their fulfilment go,
In timeless leisure ebb and flow;
And we sick men would ask to see
The meaning of *our* destiny.

Our Lord is Death. To him we give
The crown of life; that he may live,
The incense of our poisoned breath,
And well he us remembereth.

What art of surgeon probes the soul
In man's dead body, part or whole?
Why vainly search for God each spot—
The Earth is His, but He is not.



So we, His body—ah, what wealth
To be some part of Him in health,
But better far that we had died
Than lived, a cancer in His side.

Perfect by suffering must we be,
Perfect by pain—God! What of Thee—
Dost Thou grow irritant and pale
By tearing of Thy finger-nail?

Perfect by suffering—we and Thou—
Doth fever fret Thine unlined brow?
Nay! perfect Thou—then why and whence
Our agony, our putrescence?

And Thou art young and fair and strong,
Thy breath is fragrance—ah, how long
Shall men's souls lie? To them the shame
Of foul things honoured by Thy Name.

Again into the heavens we stare,
Into our hearts—What silence there!
If men are fair-made parts of Thee
And Thou perfection—what are we?



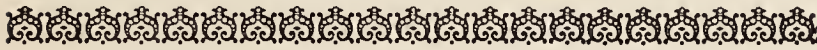
We, who through suffering grope our way
And know hell's fire sole orb of day,
When our effete ordeal is done,
What eyes have we to see Thy Sun?

Our ears are deadened by the din
Of those with us in hell shut in,
Our limbs are cramped and drawn awry,
Our tongues grow dumb, our bosoms sigh.

But Thou art young and fair! Who said,
"Long is His beard and white His head"?
So men do lie, to them the shame
Who love the lie and speed the same.

We will be young as Thou art young,
We will be strong as Thou art strong,
We will be fair as Thou art fair,
And as Thou darest, we will dare.

Dare to revolt, and thrown amain,
Dare to destroy the fiefs of pain,
Dare to exalt Thy joys, and free,
Dare to be one in health with Thee!



CRADLES OF SHADOW *

CRADLES of shadow, hourly shown,
That broken hearts may come and go,
In hallowed silence and unknown,
Lay down their piteous babes of woe.

Hark, Sister! hark—the cradle bell—
O mournful knell!
Some trembling soul hath tolled the bell;
Down in the street, against the wall,
I see a staggering figure fall.

Nay, none may help her, from all eyes
Frenzied she flies;
Loose in her arms her baby cries. . .
(How slowly lazy Joseph creeps)
And now she draws her cloak and weeps.

Hark, Sister, hark! “Nine months have gone,
Have come and gone;
Home—home and honour—I have none.
Christ! for my lost, my dear love’s sake,
I pray Thee now my soul to take.

* See appendix.



“What art thou still upon my breast?
My aching breast—

* * * * *

O baby, baby, do not smile—
Thou art a traitor soul and vile!

What! art thou knocking at my heart,
My poor, poor heart!
What! darrest thou knock upon my heart,
Thou! devil-child! wouldst pluck and be
Suckled upon mine agony?

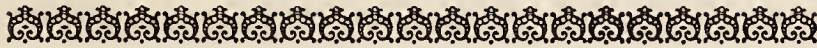
Poor baby! . . . What shouldst thou have been,
Sweetly have been?

* * * * *

The first white lambkin of our spring,
And art—this foul abhorrent thing!

He, who shouldst thy dear father be,
Ah, what is he? . .

He, who shouldst thy dear father be,
Lies scattered on his fields and fells,
A plaything for ten thousand shells.



No dainty bridal-bed was mine,
 Ever was mine,
Oh, what a bridal bed was mine—
I took my fill of pain and loss
Out-stretched upon a burning cross!

Nine woeful months have come and gone,
 O woe-begone!
Hope, hope and honour, thou hast none—
Die, baby! die . . . for my love's sake!
And pray . . . the Lord . . . our souls . . . to
 take."

No baby in the cradle sleeps.
The porter eyes the lying bell,
Across the sky pale shadows creep,
And homing winds sigh, "All is well!"



INTUITION

OUR thoughts are strange and free.
We do not know
The way we come or the way we go,
And the time is past when we could say,
"The Word has blown our doubt away,"
For now we watch with anxious look,
Those happy ones whom creed and book
Can comfort still and reassure—
Alas! for us there's no such cure
Of souls. Our simple feeling
May be the true precursor of our fate,
So that our minds' desire or state
Is every day revealing
What none may know, but all can guess,
Our future meed of happiness;
Nay, even now we may rejoice
To anticipate the heaven of our own choice.
Love, death,—they take us by the hand
And lead us further to the Unknown Land
Than any other, but we know
Nothing beyond them, deaf and blind we go.



“Ashes to ashes, dust to dust”—in vain
The scientific dogmatists explain
Their self-taught knowledge, through our rebel hearts
Rings a great Voice and deeper truth imparts.
Oh! if I knew beyond a shadow of doubt
That when I pass, my candle of soul goes out,
Nothing should rob me of my earnest faith,
That I have known at times a land where death
Has no control,—a land so fair,
Beauty and goodness reign immortal there.
Further, I bow, with ever-increasing awe,
Before the universe’s wonder and law,
Law so amazing, wonder so supreme,
Naught is impossible whilst man can dream.

Infinite littleness am I
Down-peering from the ship-hung sky;
Infinite littlenesses they are too,
Who crawl like ants across the spreading view;
Yet in each midget man
Works every impulse, urgent, warm and fine,
That breeds the spiritual greatness of this earth,
And gives their brave simplicities their birth.



Time moving forward, we can well define
The increasing wide horizons the divine;
Time moving backwards, we may better scan
Life's height and depth, the universal plan
That bids us fight and with our last faint breath,
Win to a world that IS, and knows not death.



THE MORNING LIGHT

God is a Tree.
Worlds as a leaf
Hang cheerily
Though life is brief.

God's Seasons go.
Go, summer rain,
Come, winter snow,
Leaf, bud again.

God is a Bird.
A lovely song
My heart hath heard
The leaves among.

God is the Wind,
(Rock little nest)
If He is kind,
Who dares molest?

God is a Sleep.
Sleep, drowsy earth,
Dreamlessly, deep,
The Dawn is Birth.



God is the Flash
That split the sky—
Tree, rend and crash,
A tree must die.

God is a Storm.
Fallen is the nest;
Broken and calm,
The feathered breast.

O bird! O tree!
The morning light
You cannot see
Is burning bright.

God's Seasons go.
Go, summer rain,
Come, winter snow,
World, bud again.



THE INN

SHE is not dead but sleeping," so I said
In my first grief, in sad and ignorant youth,
But over all the shadow of the dead,
A tear-stained crepe hung low—twice-hidden was truth.

The years sped on, but still her name was heard,
And still at times was heard the sound of weeping,
And still we fed our comfort with the word.
"She is at rest—she is not dead but sleeping."

But now my youth has gone; now I am old,
Her mother too, in years I well could be,
And I have grown away, long uncontrolled,
As she has grown elsewhere, away from me.

And if we met—ah, what could be the greeting
From me, the elder, to the radiant young?
How strange, embarrassed, sad, would be the meeting,
With all things changed to which her heart had clung!

Oh, I am glad she is not sleeping; strong,
Full, is her life, the universe her range;
To her our separation is not long,
She knows that life and love are born of change.



Her life is full, she has no time for grief,
She knows that nothing in this world is lasting ;
And none remember with a glad relief,
The bitter fare from which they now are fasting.

Oh ! if sometimes without God's wayside Inn,
May meet the living souls men say have died,
Or sit beside the roaring fire within,
To sing new songs, I shall be satisfied.



FLOOD AND ADVENTURE

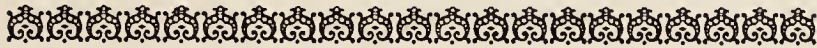
I

A MIGHTY river overflows its banks,
And washes men like rodents from their holes ;
Dark cloud-gods smite in swollen, serried ranks,
The intrepid bird-men climbing to the poles.
Sea-floors, marsh-meadows, jungles, frozen zones,
Awaiting man, are spattered with his bones.
Sucked in by whirlpools ere out-breathed by death,
Volcanoes toss him to the frenzied sky ;
Omniscient, regnant, God-suspired, a breath—
What god may heed his too reluctant cry ?
Still, still his spirit soars and swoops and searches
Beneath the firmament's unkindly arches.
Ah ! What is he ? What radiant wings infold
This spaceless heart, this tireless heart so bold ?



II

Swamp-suffocated, men and serpents cling
To twigs which overhang and fringe the flood;
Ruthless and rude, the wilier reptiles sting
And drive to death the offscourings of half-good,
Snatched from foul death to fouler death these go,
Prey of old vulture, leach and carrion crow.
Self-murdered, self-accursed, immersed in time's
Intoxicant—oh, not for these forgive
Old sordid ills—new scintillating crimes,
For these may presage death, but they will live!
Jail, dagger, flame-shot chair, or hangman's noose,
Sourly their silver cords of life unloose,
And their torn spirits creep, abased and drooping,
From felon-cells, the comet's long loop looping.
Ah! What is man? What hideous fetters hold
These crimeful hearts, these time-bound hearts so cold?



ACQUIESCENCE

A LOVER of life, he said,
“What is this burning question of the dead
Which we may never answer? No, nor find
A little light with which to lead the blind,
For many things our minds may not conceive,
What’s birth? What’s death? Oh, let us not deceive
Ourselves with thinking of this countless host
Of dead—What is a spirit? What a ghost?
No answer.”
True lover of life, again he cried,
“Where is that vast assembly which has died?
On earth,—but no!” Once more he paused and sighed,
“There is no answer.”

“Oh, this vain talk of fabulous dimension—
Are then the dead in imminent suspension
Around us, through us, in us, we aware
Of nothing? Are they incarnated
In us, these dead men long beloved or hated
For stirring deeds or loathly crimes? Are we
Sitting in judgment on ourselves?” Said he,
“There comes no answer.”



Thrice lover of life, he cried again,
“Are they alone—somewhere—it is in vain
To ask such idle questions, they must be
Working and doing, growing just as we;
If not, what is the inconstant Will—
What wasteful purpose could He fill, this God,
Who keeps them thus at a standstill?
No answer.”

“The mind grows dim,
How do those spirits skim
From planet-rim to planet-rim?
I think with him who set these thoughts aflame,
That matter, spirit, both, have but one name,

Are but one thing, and when the body goes
The soul goes too, shattered to atoms, those
Infinitesimal specks we cannot see,
Which are the spinning graves of you and me.
Nothing can be destroyed, in them lives mind,
Love, beauty, kindliness and all in kind;
To us or ours, all that we once held dear
In finer elements will re-appear.
There are no dead—



What is, we shall not know,
It is our highest bliss
In ignorance to go,
Nor shall we ever cease to strive to know."



THE SONG-PEDDLERS

THEY have brought to the city their harvest,
They have come to the town with their wares;
Hope, from the misty mountains,
Faith, from the haunted meres;
Love, from the glamorous valleys,
Health from the isles;
Sweetness and balm from the uplands,
Laughter, heart-comfort, and smiles;
Courage and strength from the ocean,
Beauty, first-born of the brave;
Joy for the birth and the marriage,
Peace for the grave.

They have lure for the lonely; the restless
May buy from them wonder; the wild
Thrill and adventure; for they are the packmen
Blest with the luck and the heart of a child.

They have brought to your city their harvest,
They have come to your town with their wares,
They come with laughter and singing
Their mountain-bred ditties and airs.



Weary and footsore, triumphant,
Torn from their dreams and their glamour
Back from the mere, and the mountain,
Fresh from the clear liliated pools,
Fresh from the "love in the valleys,"
They are lost in your guttered dim alleys,
They are set in your round-about market,
Pilloried targets for fools.



TO EMILY BRONTE

O heart that could not break,
Wild moorland heart forever strong and free!
Thy song this song doth make,
Across the hills of time I answer thee.

I see thy moorlands grim,
Harsh matrix for a soul unborn to roam;
Tender the moors and dim
The eyes that see them from a distant home.

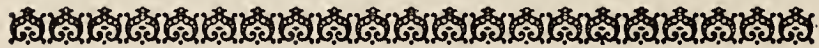
How should a bright world guess
Thy bursting heart, the fulness of thy woe,
Thy love, thy loneliness,
The strength a moorland-sheltered heart must
know.

No coward soul is thine,
Eternal God shines in thy fearless face;
No coward soul is mine,
Across dim worlds thy footsteps I would trace.



I know not where thou art ;
But this I know, when time shall call for me,
When soul and body part,
That I shall search this universe for thee.

O heart that would not break,
Wild moorland heart forever strong and free!
Thy song my song doth make.
Across what hills, what worlds I follow thee!



THE MOTORIST

A MOUNTAINOUS road
Going joyously up and down,
Giving thrills to the weak
And strength to the strong—
So, would I have my life.
Then wandering into town,
 End the brave Day
Mid comradeship and song.
What need for tears
Though this one Day be over?
At dawn the smoking road
Awaits the happy rover;
For, many a league
Of dust and fair fatigue,
And joyousness again
 He may recover—
Smoothed courses, halfway houses,
 Breathing spaces,
 Green twisting dells
And lively pleasant places,
 For many a league.



Oh, lovely is the forest ; and the rows
Of eglantine and plummy spiraea
Are lovely. Glittering grows
(How strangely beautiful) that mutineer,
 The bright arbutus !
Wild pagan is an alien fane, ~
Singing, I know not why,
 Puissant Spain
 Gay and austere.
Yes, lovely is the forest—and how clear
That walker in his stride
Taking yon mountain-side—
Wait ! In a blithe new Day,
 Should I be chidden
If I would walk this road
 So often ridden ?
If I, too, break away
Tramping lone trails alone,
Tramping steep mountains
In vigour all my own,
 Should I be chidden ?



THE DRAGON-FLY

L IFE of the tumbling sea,
Thou givest back to me
What indoor robbers took;
Here in this sunny nook,
Beneath this cedar tree,
I sit and joy in thee.

A panting dragon-fly
Drops, on my lap to lie;
She lifts her little face
And thanks me for the grace
Of timely rest
For wing and breast.

O sore mischance!
This dripping beach free-lance
Comes snuggling close
With cold wet nose,



And with his foolish puppy-play
Doth scare my dragon-fly away,
For I had found a kinship sweet
In tiny face and folded feet,
And the pathetic eyes
That looked so large and wise.

O dragon-fly! Come once again—
There is so much, so much to explain. . . .
Thou wert to me
A glimpse into infinity.



SPRINGTIME

Is it the time to sing, O lark?
The sorrowful heavens are failing,
The sun and the moon and the stars are dark
And the winds of the morning are wailing—
“It is the time, it is the time!”

Is it the time to soar, O lark?
In the meadows your love is a-nesting;
The leafless trees stand battered and stark,
For the shells of the foemen are questing—
“It is the time, it is the time!”

Is it the time to trust, O lark?
No corn in the valley is springing;
The granaries lie in ruins, and hark!
The knell of the tocsin is ringing—
“It is the time, it is the time!”

Is it the time to live, O lark?
When the idols of life are all broken?
The heaven of my soul is shuttered and dark,
And the words of my love are unspoken—
“It is the time, it is the time!”



WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

WHERE are the dead?" We ask in vain,
In vain we paint their house above,
While others mark with cold disdain
The paradise we love.

Now each must go to his own place,
Not one may snatch another's dower,
But all may hold, in part, heaven's grace,
Imaginative power.

Heaven shares no thrones, no robes, no lyres,
And we alone may name her Name,
For what on earth are our desires,
In heaven will be the same.

About us, in finite array,
A million galaxies remove,
Humbly for those we know we pray
A heaven which they can love.



TRANSFIGURATION

CLOUDS, pastures and meandering streams,
Oak trees, and cattle sunk in dreams,
The peace of God, the toil of folks,
And so we came to Cam-Lake-Oaks
I had looked long upon the lovely scene,
When ready tears rushed to my wondering eyes;
Your trees, Your folks, Your world of blue and green—
Something I saw quite other than had been.

Oh God! it was a rare and sweet surprise.
You seemed so near, as if your breath had passed
And stirred and wakened every living thing,
Which bounded into tenser life but cast
Me into deeper bondage sorrowing;
For, if the long years bring
To me no more
That strange and swift elation,
That holy earth and sky transfiguration,
That gracious unexpected ministration
Of rites undreamed before,
O God, how can I bear the great privation!



HOLIDAY AND TERM

WHEN I arise and go
To join the living dead,
With wing-beats never slow
And high, incurious head,
I shall remember then
And know my home again.

But not for long, the stars,
Bright nurseries of heaven,
Will cramp with golden bars
Those larger powers given
To me on earth below;
Again I rise and go.

So holiday and term
Must ever alternate,
And if my will be firm
No tasks me desolate;
I know that I shall see
This world's divinity.



MYSTERY

I HAD a message and I sought
Sweetly to tell the precious thought,
But hardly came the words, though long
I dallied with the elusive song.

In after years I loosely shook
The fragment from an unused book,
And saw before me, calm and real,
The perfect form of my ideal.

The meaning which I could not write,
Or thought I could not, lay in sight;
The melody I could not sing,
Now sang to me, a lovely thing,
And brought to me a gift unsought,
With many a thought I had not thought.



IN A FAR COUNTRY

IN A FAR country
All is fair,
Joy is religion,
Work is communion,
Song is prayer.
In a far country—
“Where, oh where?”

How shall we find it?
Do not fear,
Look not before you,
Look not behind you,
All is near.
“Near?—that far country—”
Here, oh here!



SHACKS

Mean hovels built from stately trees,
Low canopies that forest kings
Have arched with royal bones to house such things,
Such trivial things as these!

Rough shelves, a broken glass, a comb,
An axe, a gun, a box, a new
Bright stove, a bunk, a lamp, pots, pans, a few
Stained photographs from home.

Yet these have too a sacristan,
Holy are they, their simple aim
To serve that pure, divine, fluorescent flame,
The spirit of a man.



THE GOLDEN AGE

THIS is the Golden Age
Of restlessness and youth,
Of joyousness, of pilgrimage,
And eager quest for truth.

We roam a wider plain
Than that our fathers knew,
But their old landmarks still remain,
Forever strange and new.

What rivalry can be,
What quarrel come between?
Gods visited our fathers, we
Draw near to the Unseen.



TREASURE-TROVE

WHAT can we know of the Unknown?
Our very thoughts are not our own,
For round us, surging, lies a sea
Whose curious waves of strategy
Charmed treasure-trove retrieve.
O souls! How simple to believe
There is a fairer land,
When we behold
The bursting bales unrolled
Before us on the strand.



TO A CHILD ASLEEP

THIS body that to man-ship moves in sleep,
May all the powers of God-hood bless and keep,
So these soft limbs be not with fetters bound,
Nor this love-honoured head grow grey uncrowned,
Nor these shell-folded hands, unsceptred, fall
Apart in supplication, robbed of all;
So this fair body to its kingdom come,
And for a fairer soul provide a home;
So they together sail blue air or deep
On spirit-wings awake, as now asleep.



LITTLE HOUSES

✓
Every city has a row,
Long and thin,
Of little houses built for woe,
And the little griefs go in.

Every city digs a grave,
Deep and wide,
A roomy tomb for the old and brave,
For the joys which have not died,

And the little joys fall in,
All is done—
Bright are the houses, long and thin,
Where the little griefs live on.



I AM A NUN

I AM A NUN who loves the streets ;
An owl at highest noon astray ;
As one who fasts mid savoury meats,
And sees the good wine poured away.

Let me but guess the joy which glows
Deep in men's hearts, and sense the bliss,
Which silently in secret grows,
So comfort me for all I miss.



THE PESSIMIST

O H! pity him! He has been starved so long,
The whole creation's joy could not undo
The unforgivable wrong,
Life's banquet and its light, its wine, its song,
So beautiful, so comforting to you,
In him breeds horror and a swift disgust.
He turns, he turns away because he must.
Impoverished child! He must at first be fed
With drops of milk and doled out crumbs of bread.



TOWN-LOVERS

O H, ILL they know God's friendly town
Who on its streets and houses frown;
And he his royal sonship proves
Who knows his fellowmen, and loves.
The city, man-warmed, fills his need
Which has for God the greater greed;
In Nature near to every Part,
In town he nestles to His Heart.



THE SONG

I MADE a little song,
The Muses were not kind ;
My soul said, “ ’Tis too long,
Nor is it to my mind.”

She brewed and gave me drink,
I could not hear nor see,
And while I could not think,
She sang my song for me.



OUT OF WORK

THERE is a street down-town, where all day long,
Go silent men with lagging feet that look
As they were more familiar with rough ways
Than greasy pavements and the crowded streets;
Grey men with lagging feet and mutinous mouths—
Oh, fear those mutinous mouths, those lagging feet,
Those unseen, unraised eyes that brood and brood
On living death.



THE CANDLE

A T NIGHT when God looks down
Upon this bright, lamp-studded town,
Each bright lamp winks and winks;
 I wonder what God thinks,
 I wonder if He knows
 Each tiny lamp that glows,
And if through darkness He can see
This unlit candle which is me.



THE BIRD HOUSE

O H THOU UNKNOWN and sweetly Known!
Straight to Thy bird-house I have flown,
For what I cannot see Thou mak'st me feel,
And what I cannot hear Thou makest me to know;
Time may not hide, nor space conceal
The ways I go.



·DESTINY

THAT which we will to build,
We shall build;
That which we will to be,
We shall be;
That so determinately willed,
Is Destiny.



APPENDIX

CRADLES OF SHADOW

LESS than a year after the beginning of the Great War, the French Chamber of Deputies and Senate passed a bill to place a *Berceau Des Ombres*, or "Cradle of Shadows" in every Town Hall in the invaded provinces of Northern France. This cradle was placed on a turnstile cut in the stone wall surrounding the Town Hall.

A large bell was placed nearby to summon the authorities within as soon as an infant was placed in the cradle.

A mother could thus place her baby on the cradle, swing it inside, ring the bell and disappear. The child would be brought up at the expense of the state, and the mother would escape stigma.

One case is known where the outraged mother, in a frenzy killed her baby after its birth, and probably there were others.

No apology is needed for the inclusion of a war-poem at this time. In spite of past suffering, some of us are still in danger of forgetting the agony and the awful sacrifices of war.

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